2025/04/04 21:29 1/3 Humanism

# **Humanism**

#### **About humanism**

Humanism as a approach to education and learning paradigm was being developed since the 1960s and starts from the **belief in human inherent goodness**. This approach contrasts Freud's and biological approaches, which claim human behavior and cognition are determined by experience and prior events. Most important humanist authors that shaped this theory were Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow whose works were mostly orientated on understanding of personality.

#### Humanists emphasize:

- importance of responsibility for individuals actions, and present moment,
- worth of every individual, and
- happiness through self-achievement as the ultimate living goal.

Humanist perspectives on learning suggest:

- learning is a natural desire, a mean of self-actualization and development of personal potentials
- importance of learning lies in the **process**, not outcome,
- learners should have more control over the learning process, which should be based on observing and exploring
- the teacher should be a **role-model** encouraging the learner and provide him with reasons and motivation for every new part of the learning process.

One of Maslow's contributions widely accepted even far beyond borders of humanism is the hierarchy of needs in which he tried to formulate the **human motivation framework**. Hierarchy of needs approaches human motivation in terms of different kind of needs that have to be satisfied in order to move to the higher level of needs. Those levels include **psychology**, **safety**, **society**, **esteem** and **self-actualization needs** and need to be **satisfied in the mentioned order**.

Since humanism is more concerned with personal development which can be fostered by learning than with dealing with the results of knowledge acquisition or underlying physical and mental processes, is not always considered to be a learning paradigm. Yet it was exactly these characteristics that enabled humanism to avoid some criticisms common for all other learning paradigms. All the other paradigms, when observed in framework of educational practice attempt to quantify learning and knowledge by breaking it up into **measurable but often meaningless pieces** often out of any context. They associate learning with the classroom and a number of hours, classes, courses, number of textbooks and lectures and finally tests and grades, but very few real life experiences fit into this concept, especially since they aren't measured by grades. This also implies that someone knows<sup>1)</sup>:

- what should be learned by people (which is completely dependent on time, place and culture),
- **when** it should be learned (which is decided by educational programs and inability to follow them results in diagnose of learning disability),
- how it should be taught (as if there is a best way to teach something without any regard to the student), and
- by whom it should be taught.

# **Learning theories:**

- Experiential Learning David Kolb (1939 )
- Transformational Learning Theory Jack Mezirow

## Instructional design theories and learning models:

- Facilitation Theory Carl Rogers (1902 1987)
- Invitational Learning William Purkey (1929 )

## Other important contributors:

• John Holt, Malcolm Knowles, Paulo Freire

### **Criticisms**

Although there are viewpoint and personality tests like William Stephenson's Q methodology or Q-Sort, one of first noticed disadvantages of humanist approach is the **reduced capacity for experimental research**.

Other disadvantages of humanism include lack of methods for treating of different mental health problems and disagreement on the basic humanist assumption of inherent human goodness.

# **Bibliography**

Ashworth, Frank et al.: Learning Theories and Higher Education. Level3, Issue 2, June 2004.

Abraham Maslow - Father of Modern Management. Retrieved March 25, 2011.

Learning and teaching: Humanistic approaches to learning. Retrieved March 11, 2011.

Greenberg, G. A New Look at Learning. In Sudbury Valley School. The Sudbury Valley School Experience. The Sudbury Valley School, 1992.

### Read more

Freire, P. The Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Harmondsworth: Penguin. 1972.

Holt, J. How Children Fail Harmondsworth: Penguin. 1970.

2025/04/04 21:29 3/3 Humanism

Rogers, C. R. Freedom to learn for the 80s. New York: Free Press. 1980.

Maslow, A. Motivation and Personality (3rd edition) New York: Harper and Row. 1987.

1)

Greenberg, G. A New Look at Learning. In Sudbury Valley School. The Sudbury Valley School Experience. The Sudbury Valley School, 1992.

From:

https://learning-theories.org/ - Learning Theories

Permanent link:

https://learning-theories.org/doku.php?id=learning\_paradigms:humanism&rev=1302250353



